

Office of Attorney General Terry Goddard



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Terry Goddard to Present Phoenix Children's Hospital with \$70,000

(Phoenix, Ariz. – May 18, 2005) Arizona Attorney General Terry Goddard will present Phoenix Children's Hospital with \$70,000 to support the hospital's efforts to provide medication and treatment to low income children who suffer from asthma. The presentation will be held at Ignacio Conchos Elementary School where the Phoenix Children's Hospital Breathmobile will be hosting a clinic. **The event will be held on Monday – May 23 beginning at 11:30 a.m.**

The money will be used to help fund Phoenix Children's Hospital Breathmobile. This mobile asthma clinic is staffed with physicians, nurses and residents from Phoenix Children's Hospital, and travels to Phoenix inner-city schools to provide essential services to diagnose asthma, provide treatment and follow up care. Each year the Breathmobile serves 350 low income school-age children free of charge.

"The Breathmobile is part of a successful community outreach program to uninsured and low income children supported by donations and grants from the community," said Steve Schnall, Vice President of the Phoenix Children's Hospital Foundation.

The Center for Disease Control ranks Arizona fifth in the country for cases of diagnosed asthma.

The \$70,000 is part of a total of \$350,000 the Attorney General's Office is giving community health programs to provide low income individuals with prescription drugs to treat asthma.

"Chronic asthma requires a daily regime of expensive medication, often for a lifetime," Goddard said. "For those without prescription drug insurance coverage, many parents cannot afford to buy the medication for their children, which places them at serious risk."

The funds come from a 2004 settlement with MEDCO Health Solutions, the largest pharmacy benefit management company in the United States. Arizona joined 19 other states in this settlement of deceptive trade practices claims, which totaled \$20 million nationwide.

The lawsuit alleged that MEDCO encouraged pharmacies to switch patients to different prescription drugs but failed at times to pass on the resulting savings to patients or their health care plans. The drug switches generally benefited MEDCO despite the company's claims that they saved patients and health plans money. MEDCO did not tell prescribers or patients that the switches would increase rebate payments from drug manufacturers to MEDCO.

The settlement also required MEDCO to make important changes to its business practices so that patients and their doctors will make decisions about switching medications, not the pharmacy benefit company or the pharmacist.

"I am pleased we are able to help PCH's Breathmobile program," Goddard said. "The MEDCO settlement funds will be put to good use, and will help address a chronic illness that continues to plague Arizona families," said Goddard.

Event Information:

What:	Press Conference/Check Presentation Phoenix Children's Hospital Breathmobile
When:	Monday – May 23, 2005
Time:	11:30 a.m.
Where:	Ignacio Conchos Elementary School 1718 W. Vineyard Road

For more information, please contact Andrea Esquer at 602-542-8019.

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